



The President's Daily Brief

16 July 1970

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

16 July 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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In Cambodia, the fight for Kirirom continues. (Page 2)

Recent press accounts evidently have exaggerated North Vietnam's interest in any new talks with the US at this time. (Page 3)

On Page 4 we offer comments on the Supreme Soviet's statement on the Middle East.

The postponement of the Soviets' 24th Party Congress seems less a setback for Brezhnev than a recognition that more time is needed to prepare for the session. (Page 5)

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Communist troops in parts of South Vietnam and Cambodia may be planning increased activity to mark the Geneva accords anniversary on 20 July. (Page 7)

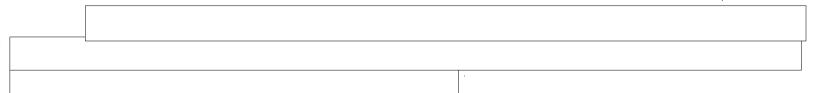
West Germany's foreign minister plans to arrive in Moscow late this month for further talks on a non-aggression pact. (Page 7)

In the United Kingdom, striking dock workers are posing the first domestic test of the Tory government. (Page 7)

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SOUTH VIETNAM - CAMBODIA - THAILAND



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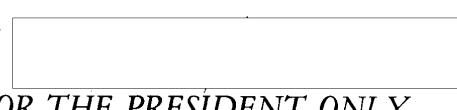


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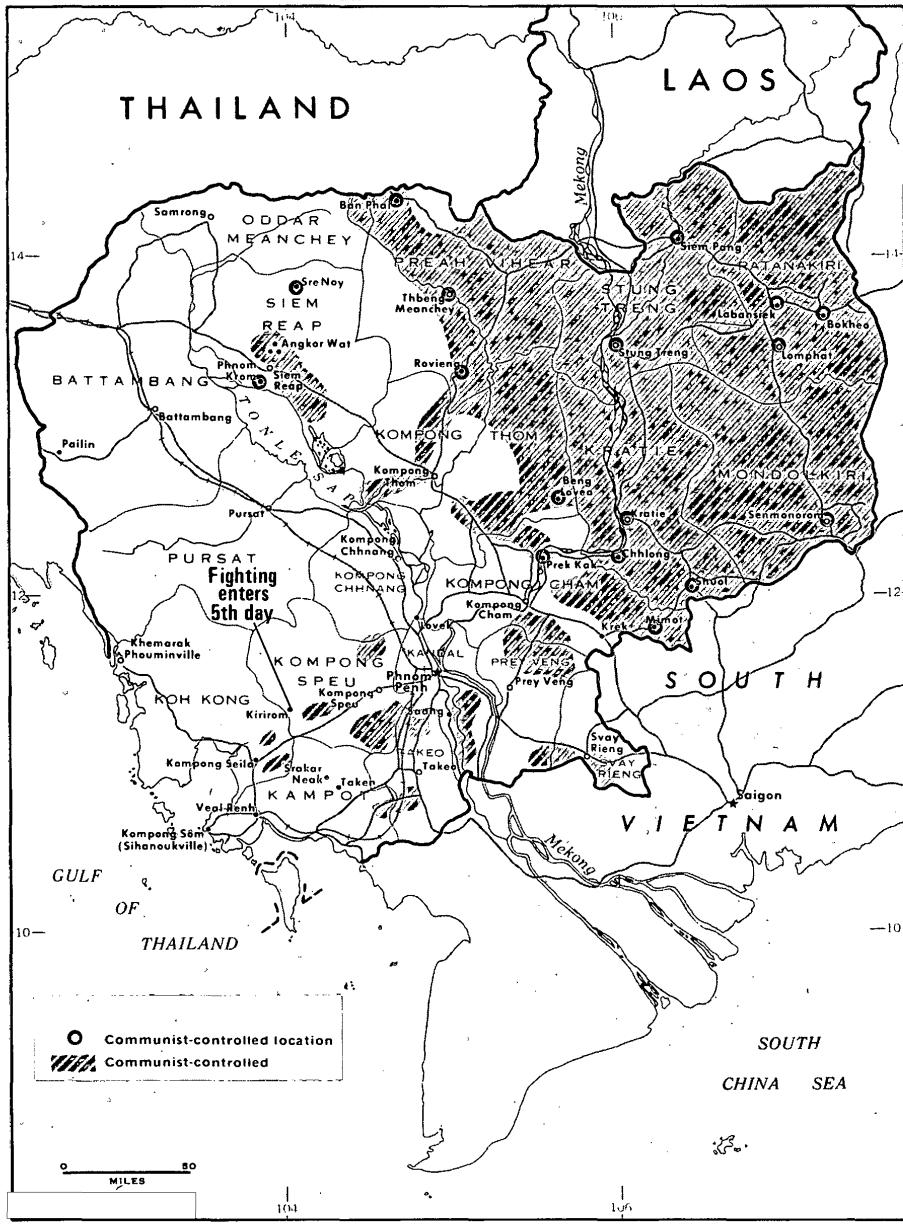
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Cambodia: Current Situation



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CAMBODIA

Enemy troops are holding their positions in the center of Kirirom. Yesterday, however, two government relief battalions gained a foothold there, despite intensive Communist mortar fire. Phnom Penh has sent a fifth battalion of reinforcements to join in the effort to retake the town.

Elsewhere, there are signs that the Communists may be preparing another attack on the Lovek ordnance depot in Kompong Chhnang Province. According to an intercepted Cambodian Army message, some 500 enemy troops were assembling at several locations west of the depot on 14 July, and government forces at Lovek have begun to destroy remaining munitions stocks to prevent them falling into enemy hands. Another battalion is being sent to reinforce the depot.

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NORTH VIETNAM

Recent press accounts claim that Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Firyubin told Indian officials that Hanoi was interested in a Geneva-type conference.

Hanoi radio has denied these reports, and [redacted]

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[redacted] official contacts of the US Embassy in New Delhi indicate Firyubin merely reiterated the standard Communist position that if the US committed itself to withdraw from Indochina on a given timetable, Hanoi might relax its opposition to a conference. Firyubin's comments in fact tend to confirm other indications that unless the US makes substantial concessions, Hanoi is not interested at the moment in opening any new talks with Washington.

The talks with Firyubin are being very tightly held by the Indian Government [redacted]

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[redacted] No mention at all is made of Laos, despite numerous indications that some Communist initiative in that area--possibly involving the International Control Commission, of which India is chairman--is in the works.

Firyubin's visit to New Delhi also was meant to soothe Indian sensitivities by filling them in on Pakistani President Yahya Khan's recent visit to Moscow. The Soviets usually attempt to do this after any high-level exchange between Moscow and Rawalpindi.

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USSR - MIDDLE EAST

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the statement on the Middle East issued by the Supreme Soviet yesterday was its attempt to allay international concern over a possible great power confrontation in the area. This was apparent in a TASS summary of the declaration, which contained a formulation novel for the Soviets that "only the peoples and governments of the Middle Eastern States should be masters of the situation in the Middle East."

Otherwise, the statement generally reflected a continuity in Moscow's policy. Once again, for example, it placed the onus for the dangerous situation on the "imperialist powers, particularly the US and its client, Israel." It balanced a warning that military danger in the area might increase "if the aggressor is not curbed" against a call for a settlement based on the UN Security Council resolution of November 1967.

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The Supreme Soviet declaration also reaffirmed Israel's right to existence, independence, and security.

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USSR

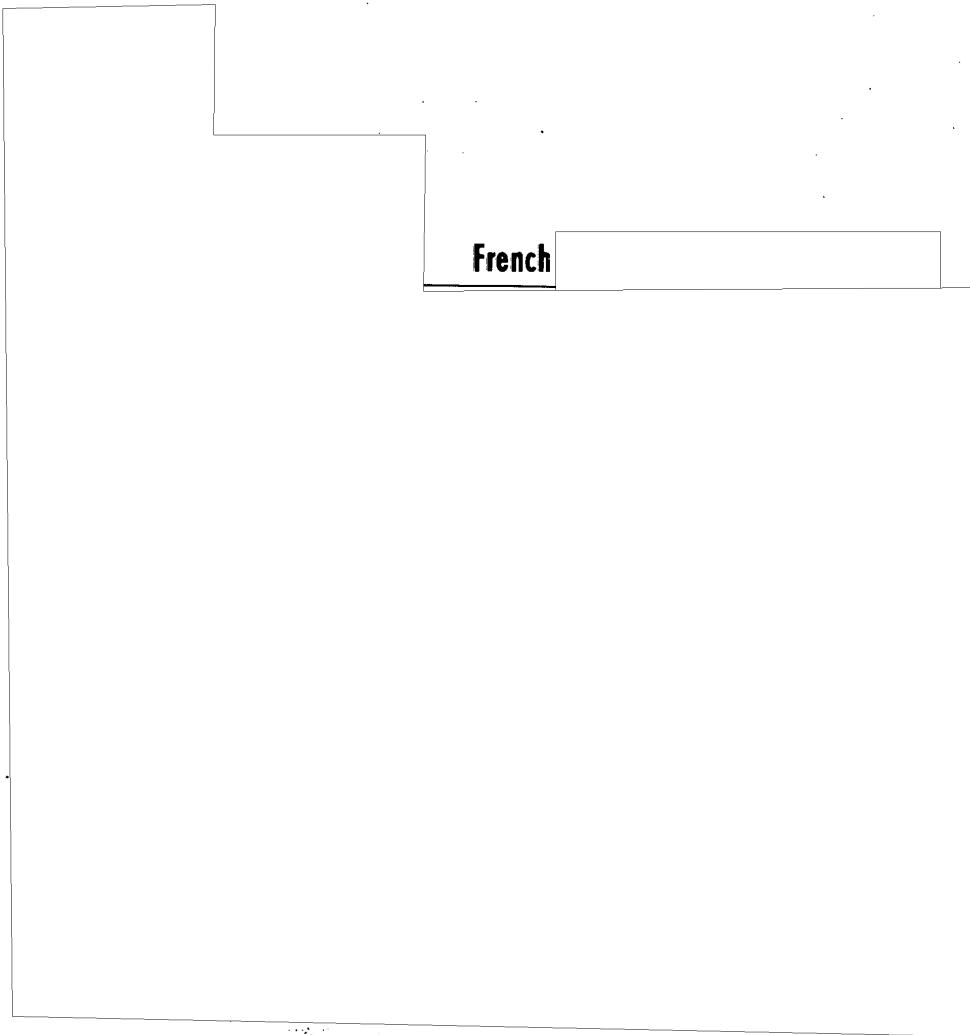
The postponement until next March of the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has led to speculation among diplomats in Moscow that this signals a defeat for Brezhnev, who as recently as 2 July had publicly reiterated a commitment to hold the meeting this year.

There may indeed have been some opposition among politburo members to convocation of a congress this year, but Brezhnev was by no means alone in calling for a 1970 date. Most of the high-level "campaigners" had mentioned it in their pre-election speeches in late May or early June. Thus the postponement looks less like a setback for Brezhnev than a recognition that more time is needed to prepare for the meeting.

The major difficulty apparently has been working out the guidelines for the 1971-1975 economic plan. Thus far, among the key sectors, priorities affecting allocation of resources have been worked out only for agriculture.

Maneuvering for position among party leaders could also have been a factor. The naming of Brezhnev and Kosygin as the main speakers at the congress may be aimed at discouraging such activity.

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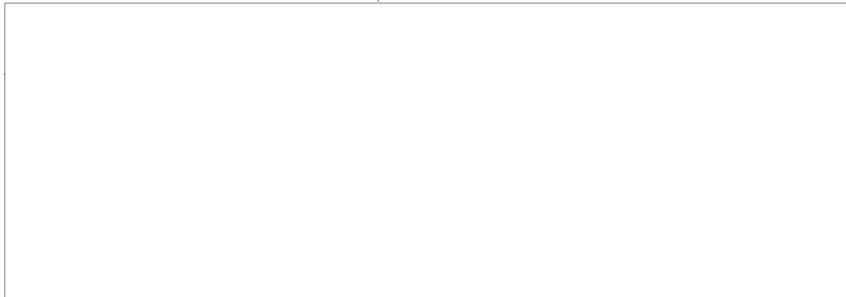


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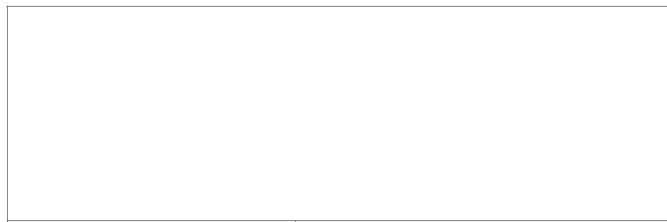
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NOTES

South Vietnam - Cambodia: There are signs that the Communists may be planning to mark the period around 20 July--the anniversary of the Geneva accords--with an upsurge of attacks in the III and IV corps areas of South Vietnam. These would likely be made primarily for psychological impact, as few Communist main force units are located near prime targets. There is some evidence that attacks may also be mounted in southeastern Cambodia.

West Germany - USSR: Gromyko has been advised that Foreign Minister Scheel plans to arrive in Moscow on 26 or 27 July for the next round of negotiations on a nonaggression pact. Gromyko concurred, noting that most West Germans seem to favor an agreement with the USSR and Eastern Europe. Bonn is generally optimistic about prospects for concluding a treaty.

United Kingdom: Considerable harm to Britain's economy could result from a nationwide dock strike at this time; the country's trade accounts are already in the red for the third successive month. The Tory government is suddenly facing its first domestic test, made particularly significant because of election pledges to do something about Britain's often chaotic labor problems. Heath's handling of the problem, especially whether he can resist pressures to employ troops in the place of the dock workers, will be watched closely by miners, local government employees, teachers, and others who are readying their own demands.

US-Europe: The potential impact of pending restrictive US trade legislation has seriously alarmed the members of the European Communities (EC). During the past few days, Dutch officials, for example, have insisted that the Mills bill, which would limit US imports of textiles and other products, could seriously damage the Netherlands' textile industry and could lead to a deterioration of the entire US-EC relationship. This may not be an idle threat; the EC has traditionally reacted as a body when the interests of one of its members have been threatened.

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